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FROM SEGREGATION TO DESEGREGATION: BLACKS IN
THE U. S. ARMY 1703-1954

BY

COLONEL RAYMOND B. ANSEL

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USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM

FROM SEGREGATION TO DESEGREGATION: BLACKS IN THE
U.S. ARMY 1703-1954

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

By

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U.S. Army War College
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The military heritage of Black Americans is as long as the history of Black presence in North America. Blacks, both slave and non-slave, have participated in military actions starting as early as 1703 when the Carolina colonial militia provided freedom to any slave who killed or captured an Indian during combat.

Crispus Attucks, a runaway Black slave, was the first American killed in the Boston Massacre of 5 March 1770, that sparked the Revolutionary War. During the Battle at Bunker Hill, it was a free Black, Peter Salem, who killed the British Officer, Major Pitcairn. It was Major Pitcairn who gave the order to fire on the minutemen at Lexington that started the American Revolution.

Black American soldiers have had to "fight for the right to fight" in our nation's wars. Progress toward equal treatment and opportunity in the U.S. Army was indeed a slow process. Prejudice against Black Americans was strong during this period in American history. However, once the Army was satisfied that integration increased military efficiency, it did not take long to desegregate its forces.

This paper does not attempt to cover the full range of Black contributions to the United States Army. The purpose of this paper is to present a brief historical overview concerning the use of Blacks in the U.S. Army between the period 1703 to 1948 and to discuss the desegregation of the U.S. Army, 1948-1954.

CHAPTER 11

BLACKS AND THE ARMY IN AMERICAN HISTORY 1703-1948

Blacks have fought in every American war. This chapter will highlight the use of Blacks in the American Army and the attitudes toward them between the period 1703 to 1948.

American Colonists and Indian Wars

In 1703 the Carolina colonial militia enacted a law that promised freedom to any slave who killed or took Indian prisoners during combat. The slave was required to produce a White witness. Should a slave be released from bondage as a result of heroism or death during combat, his former master would be paid for his valuable property loss.¹

In 1715, several hundred armed slaves fought alongside their South Carolinian masters against the Yamasse Indians and gained freedom.² The plantation owners complained that the payments did not fully cover the cost of acquiring and training another slave. This lack of adequate financial compensation prompted South Carolina in 1719 to amend its militia law so that slaves who killed or captured an Indian were only rewarded with money, not their freedom.³

In 1739, two serious armed slave insurrections at Stono and Charleston led the Carolina Assembly to exclude Black slaves from military service.⁴

French and Indian War (1753-1764)

When the New England colonies could not recruit enough Whites to meet their needs, laws excluding slaves from military service were overlooked. For slaves, the chance for freedom made fighting in colonial forces attractive. For free Blacks, the hope of elevating their low social status was a strong inducement.

Blacks served primarily as scouts, wagoners, laborers, and servants in this war. A few "trusted" slaves were armed and fought. They served in unsegregated units and received the same pay as Whites. However, money earned by slaves was paid to their masters.⁵

American Revolution (1775-1783)

On the eve of the American Revolution the colonial population was two and one half million. Approximately 20 percent of the population was comprised of Blacks. Blacks already had proven themselves in battle, and many were members of the state militias. Fear of slave revolts, however, was still strong in the minds of many White slave owners

When the Revolutionary War started on April 19, 1775, Blacks were among those who responded to the call to arms. Blacks fought with the patriots at the Battle of Lexington and at Concord, and were among those who gave their lives in those battles.⁶ But, should they be allowed to serve in the newly formed "regular Revolutionary Army"?

In May, 1775, the Committee of Safety of Massachusetts issued the following resolution:

Resolved, that it is the opinion of this Committee, as the contest now between Great Britain and the Colonies respects the liberties and privileges of

the latter, which the Colonies are determined to maintain, that the admission of any persons (as soldiers, into the army now raising, but only, such as are freemen, will be inconsistent with the principles that are to be supported, and reflect disorder on this Colony, and that no slaves are to be admitted into this army upon any consideration whatever."

George Washington assumed command of the Continental Army on June 17, 1775. On July 9, 1775, his Adjutant General issued an order instructing recruiting officers not to enlist "any soldier Negro or vagabond".⁸

Recognizing that slavery was a divisive issue, and suffering from manpower shortages, the Royal Governor of Virginia, the Earl of Dunmore, issued the following proclamation on November 1, 1775:

"... and I do hereby further declare all indentured servants, Negroes, or others, (appertaining to Rebels,) free, that are able and willing to bear arms, they joining His Majesty's Troops, as soon as may be, for the more speedily reducing the Colony to a proper sense of their duty, to His Majesty's crown and dignity."

By December 1775, 300 Blacks had joined Lord Dunmore's special "Ethiopian Regiment" to fight for their freedom in British uniforms bearing the inscription, "Liberty to Slaves".⁹

As a result of Lord Dunmore's slave recruitment, Washington authorized recruiting officers to sign up free Negroes "desirous of enlisting". General Orders issued on February 21, 1776, still prohibited the recruitment of slaves.

As the war dragged on, a critical manpower shortage threatened the American effort. In order to fill quotas, many states authorized the enlistment of slaves; the owners received financial compensation and the Blacks their freedom at war's end. By mid 1778, each American brigade averaged 42 Black soldiers integrated into the White units.

By the end of the war 5,000 Blacks were serving in the Colonial Army of 300,000.¹¹

The American Revolution did result in improving the status of free Blacks. Out of military necessity, they were permitted to serve in the American Army and thereby secured their freedom. In the flood of revolutionary idealism, some masters freed their slaves. In the North, Vermont, New Hampshire and Massachusetts abolished slavery.¹²

War of 1812 (1812-1815)

The War of 1812 was, for the most part, a naval war. Blacks constituted from 10-20 percent of most ship crews.

On land, however, the Black soldier did see action in the Battle of New Orleans. General Andrew Jackson, short of sufficient troops, promised free Black volunteers the same pay, rations, clothing, bounty money and 160 acres of land as White soldiers received. The New Orleans Militia Battalion of Free Men of Color, commanded by a White officer, Major Fortior, offered their services and were accepted by General Jackson. On the morning of January 8, 1815, when the British attacked, approximately 600 Black soldiers fought in New Orleans and assisted in inflicting one of the worst defeats in the history of the British Army. The Blacks did receive the same pay and bounties as the White soldiers, but only after endless delays. Later, however, Jackson reported to President Monroe that he included free Blacks to prevent them from fighting in the ranks of the British.¹³ The Black militia who fought so well in helping to save New Orleans were not allowed to march in the annual parade of the "Battle of New Orleans". This Black

militia battalion received no state support, and by 1834 it was nonexistent.¹⁴

After the War of 1812 strong racist policies appeared in the Army. On February 18, 1820, the U.S. Army issued a general order that read: "No Negro or Mulatto" would be recruited into the Army.¹⁵

The Civil War (1861-1865)

On April 12, 1861, the South attacked Fort Sumter. The Civil War had begun. Within days of its beginning, northern Blacks volunteered to serve. However, Lincoln was concerned about driving the slave holding border states into the Confederacy and prohibited the enlistment of Black troops. Many predicted a war of short duration. President Lincoln's stated policy was to preserve the Union. When the war began, slavery was not an issue. The need to use Blacks in fighting the war was not anticipated.

From the outset of the war, abolitionists and radical Republicans insisted it was both a war to preserve the Union and abolish slavery. The most outspoken advocate of arming the Blacks was the Black abolitionist Frederick Douglass. He said, "Colored men were good enough to fight under Washington, but they are not good enough to fight under McClellan."¹⁶

The first move to use fugitive slaves to support the war effort was made by General Benjamin Butler in May 1861. He declared Blacks who took refuge within federal lines at Fort Monroe, Virginia, to be "Contrabands of War," and put them to work in nonmilitary duties building fortifications for wages. By the end of 1861, large numbers

of Blacks were helping to build Union fortifications, working as cooks or carpenters, or working in other service areas.¹⁷

In July 1862, when Lincoln called for 300,000 volunteers, Congress revoked the militia law that excluded Blacks from serving in the Army. Lincoln was willing to use Blacks as laborers but still refused to sanction their use as combat soldiers fearing he would alienate the border states.¹⁸

In September 1862, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. He decreed that slaves held in areas in rebellion would be free effective January 1, 1863. Once President Lincoln issued this proclamation the recruitment of Black soldiers was revitalized.¹⁹ In May 1863, the War Department created the Bureau of Colored Troops to handle the recruitment, organization and service of Black regiments.²⁰

There were sixteen Black regiments, totaling 186,000 Black soldiers in the Union Army. Blacks fought in 449 engagements and 39 major battles. Sixteen Black soldiers earned the Congressional Medal of Honor. A total of 38,000 Black soldiers lost their lives fighting for the Union.²¹

The Confederacy also used Blacks, but only as laborers, in armories, mines, munitions factories, and on the railroads. Even though the South grudgingly decided to arm some Blacks towards the end of the war, they never fought.²²

Northerners appreciated the contributions that Blacks made to support the Union. The legislatures of Illinois, Iowa and Ohio repealed laws barring Blacks from immigrating into their states. Rhode Island passed a school desegregation measure. In New York public transportation was desegregated. Congress repealed an 1825 law

barring Blacks from carrying the mail. These events signaled a breach in racism.²³

The Indian Campaigns (1866-1890)

In March 1866, the U.S. Senate passed a bill establishing the Regular Army at sixty-seven regiments. The bill provided for six Black regiments, with White officers, in the regular Army. In March 1869, Congress reorganized the Army and reduced the six Black regiments to four, the 9th and 10th Cavalry Regiments and the 24th and 25th Infantry Regiments.²⁴

The four Black regiments were stationed across the West in company and battalion size units with the missions to protect settlers moving west, fight hostile Indians, guard the mail, and protect the railroad.²⁵

Despite numerous problems which reflected prejudice and discrimination within and outside the Army, the Black military experiment initiated in 1866 was a success. Regimental pride and morale in the Black units were outstanding. Their desertion rate was the lowest in the Army. Black soldiers made significant contributions in making the West safe for White settlers. Between 1869 and 1890, Black soldiers won fourteen Congressional Medals of Honor, nine Certificates of Merit and twenty-nine Orders of Honorable Mention.²⁶

Spanish-American War (1898)

On February 15, 1898, the Spanish sank the battleship Maine in Havana Harbor. In April the United States declared war on Spain. Among the units mobilized for what turned out to be a ten-week war,

were the Black 9th and 10th Cavalry and the 24th and 25th Infantry Regiments. Black units encountered racial hostilities when they were ordered to the South pending shipment to Cuba. Jim Crow laws legitimized racial prejudice. The 9th Cavalry, for example, left Lander, Wyoming, in April 1898, to the cheers and best wishes of white citizens. Once the soldiers reached the staging areas at the port of embarkation in Florida, they were treated as second-class citizens and forced to endure racial discrimination.²⁷

All four Regular Army Black regiments saw combat in Cuba. During the Battle of San Juan Hill, the 10th Cavalry received public recognition from John J. "Black Jack" Pershing (who acquired this nickname while serving with the 10th Cavalry), for the rescue of Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders and turning disaster into a smashing victory.²⁸

On July 15, 1898, the Spanish surrendered. The Army awarded five Medals of Honor and twenty-six Certificates of Merit to Blacks for their heroism in the Spanish-American War.²⁹

World War I (1914-1918)

World War I broke out in Europe in 1914. The United States did not declare war against Germany until April 1917. The regular Army 9th and 10th Cavalry, plus the 24th and 25th Infantry, were stationed in the West. The Black units were involved in the Mexican Punitive Expedition against Pancho Villa and were also serving on U.S. border patrol duty. They would not see overseas service during WWI.

Two Black infantry divisions were formed from reserve and National Guard units and sent to France. The 93d Division arrived in

December 1917, and the 92d Division in July 1918. The Army's policy ruled out integrated units. Per General Pershing's orders the Black divisions were assigned to the French Army. There were equipped with French rifles, ate French rations and fought with French units until the end of the war. The 93d Division casualties were 3,000, with 584 killed - a 35 percent casualty rate. Casualties for the 92d Division amounted to 2,100 with 176 killed.²⁰

The Blacks assigned to combat duty represented only a small percentage of the Black troops in the Army - about 42,000 out of 380,000. Of the 200,000 Blacks sent to France, 160,000 served in labor battalions, stevedore companies, engineer service battalions, and pioneer infantry battalions. Almost one-third of the labor troops in the Army were Black. The General Staff's attitude was that since most Blacks had been manual laborers in civilian life, they should be laborers in the Army.

The depth of racism in the American Army was revealed in a document sent to the French Army by the American Army Headquarters in August, 1918. The information was to be distributed to all French Army officers and French civilian officials in areas where American Black troops were stationed. It stated that Negroes in American would be a "menace of degeneracy" if it were not for segregation. White Americans resented any "familiarity" with Negroes and considered it "an affront to their national policy". Americans regarded Negroes as "inferior", and the "vices of the Negro", particularly rape, "are a constant menace to the White American who has to repress them sternly". The French were cautioned against mingling too freely with

Black Americans to avoid "aspirations which are intolerable to whites".³¹

On Bastille Day, July 14, 1919, Paris celebrated with a victory parade. Both the French and the British had Black troops march as part of their contingents. Only the United States failed to include Black soldiers in its line of march.³²

Discrimination against Black soldiers intensified as they returned home for demobilization and discharge. Soldiers of the 92d Division were assigned to sail on the USS Virginia. Once aboard, they were ordered off by the ship's Captain and replaced by White soldiers, with the explanation that "No Colored troops had ever travelled on this ship and none ever would."³³

Although there was blatant racial discriminatory treatment of Blacks, World War I saw the largest number of Blacks in commissioned grades since their entry into the Army. Over 1,300 Black officers, most 2nd or 1st Lieutenants, saw duty in World War I.³⁴

Blacks were awarded fifty-seven Distinguished Service Crosses for outstanding bravery on the battlefield.³⁵

Inner War Years (1919-1941)

The war ended on November 11, 1918. Upon returning to the United States, Black veterans found that Southern Jim Crow laws were rampant. Several veterans returning to the South were assaulted by White crowds at railway stations and stripped of their uniforms.³⁶

The Ku Klux Klan was revived in the southern states and became a national organization in 1920. During the first year of the postwar

period more than seventy Blacks were lynched, many of them soldiers still in uniform.³⁷

Racial stereotypes and the belief that Blacks were inferior were widespread among high-ranking Army officers in the 1920's and 1930's. This attitude is not surprising considering that many of these officers had served in World War I and had heard reports that Blacks were cowards on the battlefield, would not fight at night and were mentally inferior to Whites.³⁸

Soon after World War I the Army staff began developing a policy for the use of Black manpower. Most Army officers and War Department policy making officials held that segregation was a requirement. Many of their assumptions were based on the racist attitudes being expressed at that time. The Army "took the position that it was operating within a social framework which it did not create and which it did not have the power to alter in any significant manner."³⁹

Reports submitted by White Army officers indicated that Blacks did not perform well in combat. On October 30, 1925, the US Army War College submitted a SECRET study (AWC 127-25) to the Army Chief of Staff. The subject was "Employment of Negro Man Power in War". This report stated as fact that, "The Negro is mentally inferior to the white man" and "he can not control himself in the face of danger to the extent the white man can".⁴⁰ Their opinion was:

In the process of evolution the American negro has not progressed as far as the other sub-species of the human family. As a race he has not developed leadership qualities. His mental inferiority and the inherent weakness of his character are factors that must be considered with great care in the preparation of any plan for his employment in war.⁴¹

Between the end of World War I and 1940 the Army staff formulated several policy statements of the use of Negro manpower. The position of the War Department on the utilization of Negro troops in the summer of 1940 - on the eve of the greatest expansion the US Army would ever undergo - was:

1. Negroes would be mobilized in the same percentage as they occur in the general population - approximately 9-10 percent.
2. Negroes would be utilized in all types of units for which they could qualify. Combat arms assignments should be the same ratio for Negroes and whites.
3. Negroes would serve in units consisting of all-Negro enlisted personnel, but these units did not need to be employed separately. A strong group of Army leaders believed that Negro units should be kept small and assigned or attached to larger white units.
4. Officers for Negro units could be Negro or white. Negro officers were to be selected and trained to the same standards as white officers, preferably trained at the same schools. Negro officers were to serve only with Negro units.
5. Negro troops were to be trained, officered, housed, clothed and provided the same facilities as white troops.⁴²

The Protective Mobilization Plan of 1940 provided only enough units to accommodate 5.81 percent Blacks. The primary reason for this shortfall between policy and practice was that some chiefs of the Army branches objected to the assignment of Blacks to their commands. For example, both the Chief of the Air Corps and the Signal Corps did not believe that Blacks qualified for their branches. The Chief of the Air Corps also stated that using Blacks would result in "the impossible social problem" of having Negro officers command White enlisted men. The War Department General Staff (G-3) supported the restrictive policies of the Air Corps and Signal Corps.⁴³

World War II (1941-1945)

Army Policies on the limited use of Blacks in World War I were continued in World War II. Blacks were located primarily in support

units. Only 2.8 percent were put into combat arms. Quartermaster units held 45.6 percent and transportation units had 32.3 percent Blacks. The percentage of Blacks in the Army varied from 5.9 percent at the time of Pearl Harbor to a high of 8.7 percent in September 1944.⁴⁴

In July 1940, the Army allowed Blacks to enlist only in colored units. The Army Air Corps, Tank Corps, Artillery, Engineers, and Signal Corps were "off limits" to Blacks. Blacks could not enlist in the Marine Corps. The Navy would only accept Blacks as mess attendants.⁴⁵

On September 14, 1940, Congress passed the Burk-Wadsworth Bill, which provided for the first peacetime draft in American history. The President signed it into law on September 16, 1940, as the Selective Service and Training Act. This Act required the registration of all men between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-five and authorized the induction of 800,000 draftees. Section 4 (a) stated that "there shall be no discrimination against any person on the account of race or color" in the selection and training of men inducted. However, section 3 (a) limited induction to those who were acceptable to the land and naval services and vested "unlimited discretion" in the military and naval authorities.⁴⁶

The belief that Black soldiers were racially inferior in combat, but well suited for service of labor duties, continued throughout World War II. Commanders considered Black units undesirable; therefore, they were under utilized overseas. In April 1943, only 79,000 out of 504,000 Black troops were overseas - about 15 percent. The bulk of these were in service units.⁴⁷

In response to political pressures, three Black divisions were activated, the two World War I units, the 92d and 93d Divisions, and the 2d Cavalry Division. The 2d Cavalry Division, which included the old and battle-hardened 9th and 10th Cavalry, was shipped to North Africa early in 1944. The Division was immediately broken up into service units and the men assigned to unloading ships, repairing roads and driving trucks.⁴⁸

The main effort to get Black soldiers into combat was centered on the 92d Infantry Division. In June 1944, the 92d was sent to Italy and experienced several successes. While there were over 7,000 decorations awarded to individual members of the division, the unit was reported as being "trigger happy" and "melting away" under enemy pressure.⁴⁹

On the Western Front the need for infantry replacements became critical following the Battle of the Bulge. Lieutenant General John C.H. Lee obtained authority for Black enlisted soldiers from service units to volunteer for duty as infantrymen. They would receive six weeks of combat training and then be integrated on a platoon basis with White front-line infantry divisions. Blacks responded so enthusiastically that a limit of 2,500 was set. This quota resulted in 3,000 applicants being turned down. The Black platoons were assigned to eleven White combat divisions, and Blacks and Whites fought side by side as they moved across Germany from March 1945 to V-E Day, May 8, 1945.

It is interesting to note that General Lee had intended for the soldiers to be fully integrated and assigned on an individual replacement basis. After obtaining concurrence from Generals Patton,

Bradley and Hodges he presented the plan to General Eisenhower. General Eisenhower's Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Bedell Smith, pointed out that this was against Army policy and insisted that the plan be sent to General George C. Marshall, Army Chief of Staff, for approval. The Army top command in Washington became indignant. This plan violated one of the Army's basic rules. However, since the men had trained, and the need for replacements was so great, the Army command in Washington modified the plan and allowed the infiltration of Black platoons into White regiments.⁵⁰ The Black soldiers received commendations from their division commanders and from General Eisenhower. General George S. Patton approved of the integrated platoons in his command and told a Black correspondent that he was thinking about recommending that mixed units in the Army continue.⁵¹ The War Department recognized that the Blacks had "established themselves as fighting men no less courageous or aggressive than their White comrades".⁵²

In June 1945 the Research Branch, Information and Education Division, Headquarters of the European Theater of Operations, U.S. Army, published a survey entitled "The Utilization of Negro Infantry Platoons in White Companies". The survey concluded that:

1. White soldiers who had served in combat with Blacks had undergone a significant change in their racial attitudes.
2. At first, 64 percent of White soldiers resented the integration plan and seriously doubted it would work.
3. However, after serving in combat with Blacks, 84 percent of the White officers and 81 percent of the White sergeants said that the

2,500 volunteers fought "very well". Only 1 percent of the sergeants and none of the officers said that they had not done well.

4. Seventy-seven percent of the White soldiers interviewed stated that as a result of their experience, "their regard and respect for the Negro had become more favorable".⁵³

The results of this survey were never made public. Nor were the Black volunteers permitted to remain with their White divisions. As soon as the war ended in Europe the Black platoons were unceremoniously returned to all-Black service units or discharged.⁵⁴ However, the success of the integration experiment was not forgotten by the War Department. One of the recommendations of the 1946 Gillem Report was "that grouping Negro units with White units in composite organizations be continued in the postwar Army as a policy."⁵⁵

Outside the infantry, other Black units made significant contributions to the war effort. In January 1941, the Army Air Corps began accepting Black pilots and mechanics. However, the Air Corps refused to train Black pilots at established flight training centers; rather, they set up a segregated base at Tuskegee, Alabama. The Air Corps was the only branch of the Army to train Blacks at a separate school.⁵⁶ There were two Black combat aviation units sent overseas, the 332d Fighter Group and the 99th Pursuit Squadron. Both saw combat over Europe escorting bombers and flying strafing missions. In over 200 missions, not one U.S. bomber being escorted by the 99th was lost to enemy fighters. By V-E Day, the 332d had flown 15,533 sorties and was credited with destroying 261 enemy planes. They received 865 awards: 1 Legion of Merit; 1 Silver Star; 95 Distinguished Flying Crosses; 2 Soldier's Medals; 14 Bronze Stars; 744 Air Medals; and 8

Purple Hearts.⁵⁷ On V-J Day, August 14, 1945, there were over 80,000 Blacks in the Army Air Forces.

World War II did see a significant change in the training of Black officers. With the exception of the Air Corps, all officers candidate schools in the Army were integrated at the beginning of World War II. Whites and Blacks ate, slept, and trained together in Officer Candidate School without incidents. That demonstrated that integration in the Army could work without drastic consequences.⁵⁸ In addition, five Blacks graduated from West Point during World War II.

The "fight for the right to fight" was waged continuously by the 920,000 Black soldiers inducted into the Army in World War II. By V-J Day, although Blacks did not attain full equality in the Army, they had greatly improved their military status.

Interim Years (1945-1947)

On August 14, 1945, Japan surrendered and World War II was over. In May of 1945, the Army directed all field commanders to submit a report on the performance of their Black units and to provide recommendations on postwar policy toward Blacks. Most commanders clung to stereotyped racist comments of Black troops: "Children at heart"; "fine on parade but cowards in battle"; or "afraid of the dark". They stated that Blacks, because of inferior mental abilities and peculiar emotional qualities, were best suited for labor duty and the "practical considerations require segregation and quota systems".⁵⁹ General Joseph T. McNarvey, Commander of the Mediterranean Theater of Operations, recommended that an experiment be conducted by integrating Blacks into White squads.

On September 27, the Secretary of War, Robert P. Patterson, directed the Army's Chief of Staff, General Marshall, to appoint a board of officers to review the Army's present Negro policy and to prepare a new one that would efficiently utilize this segment of American's manpower. The members of this board were Lieutenant General Alvan C. Gillem, Jr.; Major General Lewis A. Pick; and Brigadier General Winslow C. Morse. The board was named after its chairman, Lieutenant General Gillem, Jr. and held its first meeting on October 1, 1945. On November 17, 1945, the Gillem Board finished the study and forwarded its report to the Chief of Staff.⁶⁰

The Board made the following recommendations:

1. a. That combat and service units be organized and activated from the Negro manpower available in the postwar Army to meet the requirements of training and expansion and in addition qualified individuals be utilized in appropriate special and overhead units.

- b. The proportion of Negro to white manpower as exists in the civil population be the accepted ratio for creating a troop basis in the postwar Army.

2. That Negro units organized or activated for the postwar Army conform in general to other units of the postwar Army but the maximum strength of type units should not exceed that of an infantry regiment or comparable organization.

3. That in the event of universal military training in peacetime, additional officer supervision be supplied to units which have a greater than normal percentage of personnel falling into A.G.C.T. classifications IV and V.

4. That a staff group of selected officers whose background has included command of troops be formed within the G-1 Division of the staffs of the War Department and each major command of the Army to assist in the planning, promulgation, implementation and revision of policies affecting all racial minorities.

5. That there be accepted into the Regular Army an unspecified number of qualified Negro officers; that officers initially selected for appointment in the regular establishment be taken from those with experience in World War II; that all officers, regardless of race, be required to meet the same

standard for appointment.

6. That all officers, regardless of race, be accorded equal rights and opportunities for advancement and professional improvement; and be required to meet the same standard for appointment, promotion and retention in all components of the Army.

7. That Negro officers to meet requirements for expansion of the regular establishment and for replacements be procured from the following sources:

- (a) Reserve officers, including ROTC graduates, who shall be eligible for active duty training and service in accordance with any program established for officers of like component and status.
- (b) Candidates from the ranks.
- (c) Graduates of the United States Military Academy.
- (d) Other sources utilized by the Army.

8. That all enlisted men, whether volunteers or selectees, be routed through reception and training centers, or other installations of a similar nature to insure proper classification and assignment of individuals.

9. That reenlistment be denied to Regular Army soldiers who meet only the minimum standards.

10. That surveys of manpower requirements conducted by the War Department include recommendations covering the positions in each installation of the Army which could be filled by Negro military personnel.

11. That groupings of Negro units with white units in composite organizations be continued in the postwar Army as a policy.

12. The principle that Negro units of the postwar Army be stationed in localities where community attitudes are most favorable and in such strength as will not constitute an undue burden to the local civilian population be adopted; exceptions to this principle to be premised on the basis of military necessity and in the interest of national security.

13. That at posts, camps and stations where both Negro and white soldiers are assigned for duty, the War Department policies regarding use of recreational facilities and membership in officers' clubs, messes or similar social organizations be continued in effect.

14. That the commanders of organizations, installations and stations containing Negro personnel be made fully cognizant of their responsibilities in the execution of the overall War Department policy; and conversely that they be permitted maximum latitude in the solution of purely local problems.

15. That the War Department, concurrently with promulgation of the approved policy, take steps to insure the indoctrination of all ranks throughout the Service as to the necessity for an unreserved acceptance of the provisions of this policy

16. That approval and promulgation of a policy for utilization of Negro manpower in the postwar Army be accomplished with the least practicable delay.

17. That upon approval of this policy steps be initiated within the War Department to amend or rescind such laws and official publications as are in conflict therewith.

18. That the recommended policy as approved by the War Department, with reference to the utilization of the Negro manpower in the postwar Army be unrestricted and made public.⁶¹

The Board stated that its recommendations were based on two principles: Black Americans have a constitutional right to fight; and that the Army has a obligation to make the most effective use of every soldier. The Gillem Board declared that its recommendations took into account reports of the Army's wartime experience with Black soldiers. It referred to this experience, citing the satisfactory performance of the Black infantry platoons integrated into White companies in Europe during World War II as "eminently successful."⁶²

The Gillem Board reconvened in January 1946 to consider the comments presented by the Army Staff on its report. After two weeks of deliberation the Board stood firm on its original conclusions and recommendations and on February 26, 1946, published a supplementary report and added the following appendix:

Objectives: The Board visualizes at this time only two objectives:

The Initial Objective: The utilization of the proportionate ratio of the manpower made available to the military establishment during the postwar period. The manpower potential to be organized and trained as indicated by pertinent recommendations.

The Ultimate Objective: The effective use of all manpower made available to the military establishment in the event of a mobilization at some unknown date against an undetermined aggressor. The manpower to be utilized in the event of another major war, in the Army without regard to antecedents or race.⁶³

General Dwight D. Eisenhower succeeded Marshall as Chief of Staff on November 19, 1945. He reviewed the board's recommendations and sent the proposed policy to the Secretary of War with a positive recommendation for approval. On February 28, 1946, Secretary Patterson approved the new policy. The entire Gillem Board Report was published as War Department Circular 124 on April 27, 1946, and was sent to the field. The report was released to the press on March 4, 1946.⁶⁴

The Gillem Report provided increased opportunities for Blacks. Blacks would now be assigned as individuals and integrated into special and overhead units that performed Post administrative and maintenance support. The Plan recommended reorganizing the Army by eliminating the all-Black Army division and consolidating Black platoons into White companies, Black companies into White battalions, and Black battalions into White regiments. The 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, added the former all-Black 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion, the 503d Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion and the 758th Tank Battalion to the famed "All-American Division".⁶⁵ However, the Gillem Plan limited integration to duty hours only. The Plan also limited the number of Blacks in the Army to a 10 percent ratio.⁶⁶

Although some actions were taken to implement the Gillem Board recommendations, most were largely limited to paper proposals. The 10 percent quota system was executed. The Army initiated a recruiting

campaign which offered Blacks who would sign-up for a three-year period their choice of branch and theater of operation. The Black response was so positive that by the summer of 1946 the quota system had been exceeded and Blacks could no longer enlist in the Army. It was not until 1947 when the number of Blacks in the Army had been reduced to the quota level that the ban on recruitment was lifted.⁶⁷

Summary

Since the introduction of Blacks into the service the official policy of the U.S. Army was to keep the White and Black races segregated in separate units. Black officers were limited and only assigned to Black units. White officers normally commanded Black units. Because they were considered unsuitable for combat, most Blacks were employed in service support units during World Wars I and II. The Gillem Board was the first Army Board to evaluate the utilization of Black manpower. The Board published its findings in February 1946, concluding that in previous wars Black manpower had not been fully utilized and recommended the assignment of Black and White groups in composite units. The Gillem Board opened the future of racial integration in the Army.

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CHAPTER III

DESEGREGATION OF THE U.S. ARMY 1948-1954

On July 26, 1948, President Harry S Truman signed Executive Order 9981, declaring a policy of equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the military without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin.

This executive order heralded the beginning of the end of the policy of segregation that had existed in the Armed Forces of the United States since the Revolutionary War.

Executive Order 9981

Whereas it is essential that there be maintained in the United States the highest standards of democracy, with equality of treatment and opportunity for all those who serve in our country's defense:

Now, therefore, by virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States, and as Commander in Chief of the armed services, it is hereby ordered as follows:

1. It is hereby declared to be the policy of the President that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin. This policy shall be put into effect as rapidly as possible, having due regard to the time required to effectuate any necessary changes without impairing efficiency or morale.

2. There shall be created in the National Military Establishment an advisory committee to be known as the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services, which shall be composed of seven members to be designated by the President.

3. The Committee is authorized on behalf of the President to examine into the rules, procedures and practices of the armed services in order to determine in what respect such rules, procedures and practices may be altered or improved with a view to carrying out the policy of this order. The Committee shall confer and with the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of the Navy, and the Secretary of the Air Force, and shall make such recommendations to the President and to said Secretaries as in the judgment of the Committee will effectuate the policy hereof.

4. All executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government are authorized and directed to cooperate with the Committee in its work, and to furnish the Committee such information or the services of such persons as the Committee may require in the performance of its duties.

5. When requested by the Committee to do so, persons in the armed services or in any of the executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government shall testify before the Committee and shall make available for the use of the Committee

such documents and other information as the Committee may require.

6. The Committee shall continue to exist until such time as the President shall terminate its existence by Executive Order.¹

The Order also established a Presidential Committee to study the armed services' racial policies and to determine the best way to implement the Presidential policy.² The board was named after its chairman Charles Fahy. The Fahy Committee did not formally meet until after President Truman was reelected, and held its first session with the President at the White House on January 12, 1949.³

The attitude of the Army's senior leadership towards segregation at the time President Truman issued his desegregation order can best be demonstrated by statements made by General Eisenhower three months prior to the order, and General Omar N. Bradley the day after the order was released. General Bradley succeeded General Eisenhower as Chief of Staff on February 7, 1948. Two months after giving up his position as the Army's Chief of Staff, General Eisenhower made a statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee on April 2, 1948, in which he supported Army segregation.⁴ The day after the President issued his order, General Bradley, while speaking to a group of instructors at Fort Knox, Kentucky, stated that the Army would remain segregated as long as it was the national pattern. General Bradley apologized to the President for his statement, which was published in

The Washington Post on July 28, saying that he was unaware of the President's Executive Order at the time of his speech.⁵

Despite the publicity given to General Bradley's statements at Fort Knox, it was the Secretary of the Army, Kenneth C. Royall, who led the fight against desegregating the Army. Royall was convinced that integration would disrupt the Army and endanger its efficiency. He stated that the separate but equal provisions of the Gillem Board policy provided equal opportunity for Black soldiers.⁶

The President's Executive Order had no immediate effect on the Army's racial policy. In March 1949, the Adjutant General informed Army commanders it would not republish War Department Circular 124 while the Fahy Committee was studying the issue, but that policies contained in that document would continue in effect until further notice.⁷

Following the resignation of Secretary Royall, President Truman nominated Gordon Gray to be the Secretary of the Army. The Senate confirmed his appointment on June 13, 1949.⁸ While the Fahy Committee was conducting its study, on September 18, 1949, Gray appointed a panel of senior Army officers under Lieutenant General Stephen J. Chamberlin to review the Army's racial policies and provide recommendations. On February 9, 1950, Chamberlin provided the Secretary of the Army with the following recommendations:

1. The policies established by War Department Circular 124 (1946) as amended, and Army Regulations 210-10 and letter AGO 8 July 1944, pertaining to recreation, wherein not in conflict with recent changes of policy continue in effect.
2. That the 10% limitation on Negro manpower in the Army be continued and that Negro units be continued.
3. That effort be continued to improve the standards of

enlisted men in the Army and that steps be taken to raise the Negro GCT level to that of whites, even if in the process the number of Negro soldiers should fall below 10% of the total.

4. That efforts be continued to perfect plans for the full utilization of Negro manpower for mobilization and war.

5. That no further changes be made in Department of the Army policies in the utilization of Negro manpower pending evaluation of experiences gained from the policies announced in Special Regulations 600-629-1, Department of the Army, 16 January 1950.

6. That a special group in the Department of the Army be established to keep under continuous study the problem of the efficient employment of Negro troops, and to assist in the planning, promulgation and revision of current policies.⁹

The Fahy Committee opposed segregation on the grounds that it did not make full use of Black skills and specialties. In May 1949, the Committee submitted to the Army the following four-point plan to achieve the President's objective:

1. Open up all Army jobs to qualified personnel without regard to race or color.

2. Open up all Army schools to qualified personnel without regard to race or color.

3. Rescind the policy restricting Negro assignments to racial units and overhead installations, and assign all Army personnel according to individual ability and Army need.

4. Abolish the racial quotas.¹⁰

On October 1, 1949, Secretary Gray issued an order which opened all jobs in the Army to Blacks and abolished racial quotas in Army schools.¹¹

On January 15, 1950, Special Army Regulation 600-629-1 was published. This regulation established a policy of "equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the Army without regard to race, color, religion or national origin".¹²

On March 27, 1950, the Army abolished the recruiting quota system. This resulted in a rapid rise in the number of Black enlistments, which reached 28 percent of the total Army enlistments within the first few months. As a result, the ten basic training divisions were integrated at about the same time that the Korean War broke out. By July 31, 1951, there were 190 integrated units in the United States.¹³

It was the Fahy Committee that established the necessary policies for desegregating the Army. It was the Korean War that established the need and environment that permitted desegregation to occur.

Korean War (1950-1953)

The outbreak of hostilities in Korea occurred about the same time the Army abolished the Black recruiting quota system. Since all-Black training units could not absorb the excess Blacks, and since the Army was unwilling to designate additional Black units, the solution was to integrate Black recruits with White soldiers in the same basic training units. In August, 1950, Brigadier General Frank McConnell, the post commander at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, started integrating basic trainees. It worked well. When the Department of the Army was informed of Fort Jackson's success it asked other training posts to visit Fort Jackson. By March 18, 1951, all Army basic training were integrated.¹⁴

The Korean conflict erupted on June 25, 1950. The stateside situation of excess Blacks and a shortage of White soldiers impacted on the replacement system to the Far East. It was this factor, coupled with the reported unsatisfactory performance of some all-Black

units during the initial phase of the Korean War, that led to the first large-scale integration effort in Korea.

In September 1950, Major General William B. Kean, commander of the 25th Division, recommended that the 24th Infantry Regiment - the largest of the fourteen all-Black units in the Far East Command at the outbreak of the Korean War - be abolished and its Black soldiers be integrated throughout other units in Korea. He made it clear that he was against Black units, not Black soldiers. Subsequent investigations by the Eighth Army Inspector General confirmed that all-Black units generally required up to 25 percent more commissioned and noncommissioned officers than similar White units. This was due to the fact that Blacks had much lower than average general classification test scores (AGCT).¹⁵ The Eighth Army Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, recommended the integration of Blacks into all units up to 15 percent of strength with implementation to take place through normal attrition and replacement processes. He based this recommendation on the fact that limited integration had already occurred in Korea, and concluded from reports of the noted military historian Brigadier General S.L.A. Marshall, who was then serving for the Eighth Army as an Infantry Operations Analyst, that Black soldiers could and did fight well when integrated. Marshall had witnessed integrated units in action in November 1950, during the Yalu River retreat and was convinced that integration was successful enough to be extended throughout the Army.¹⁶

The Department of the Army eventually approved integration in the Far East Command. On October 1, 1951, Black soldiers of the 24th

Infantry Regiment were transferred to White units and the regiment was inactivated.¹⁷

Not all officers in Korea were convinced that integration was good for the Army. Marshall's recommendation that integration be extended to all units in the Army was received with a "completely negative view" at General Douglas MacArthur's headquarters in Japan.¹⁸ In 1951 no Blacks were assigned to MacArthur's headquarters in Tokyo.¹⁹ In Korea, Lieutenant General Edward M. Almond, a South Carolinian who Commanded Xth Corps and the former commander of the Black 92nd Division in Italy during World War II, directed that Blacks be resegregated in all units under his command. Major General Clark L. Ruffner, commander of the 2nd Division, was ordered by Almond to replace Black casualties or transfers with White soldiers. Thus, the 2nd Division became an all White outfit. Ruffner received large numbers of Black replacements and "wanted to assign some to White combat artillery, but was under strict orders from Almond not to place any Blacks in White combat units".²⁰

In February 1951, the Chamberlin Board was recalled and asked to prepare a new report in light of the integration experience in Korea. The Board stated in its report that combat units performed better when integrated and that Black-White friction actually decreased. The Board concluded in the report that it was concerned over the effects of bringing into the Army more and more Blacks with low intelligence scores who might be unassimilable and would dangerously reduce the fighting efficiency of combat units. The Chamberlin Board recommended the reimposition of the 10 percent quota and the retention of segregated Black units.²¹

By early 1951 then, there was no definite assignment policy for Blacks in Korea. Some units were integrating while at the same time others were resegregating.²²

The reports of integration and segregation at the same time resulted in a confused reaction in the Pentagon. Seeking further guidance about the correct course to follow, the Army Staff Personnel and Administration Division, G-1, asked for the opinions of twenty-two officers who had recent experience with integration. Seventeen of the officers were for while only two were against integration.²³

Senators Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota, and Herbert M. Lehman of New York, led a group of congressmen who started pressuring the military to put an end to segregation once and for all. In April 1951, Assistant Secretary of the Army Earl D. Johnson, expressed alarm over the fact that some all-Black units were as much as 62 percent overstrength. This was indefensible since throughout Korea there was a shortage of personnel. He told the Army that the solution was obvious. Take the excess Black overstrength and distribute it throughout the other units in the Army. "If non-segregation works as well as it has in certain units, I can see no good reason why it should not work for other units", Johnson told the Secretary of the Army Frank Pace.²⁴

Johnson used the overstrength problem to argue for complete integration. The Army General Staff and General Mark Clark, commander of the Army Field Forces, took the position that the Korean integration had not been proven to be a definite success and argued to reimpose the racial quota system as the solution to the Black unit

overstrength problem. Secretary Pace followed Johnson's recommendation and refused to reimpose the quota.²⁵

In an effort to resolve the integration issue, in late March 1951, the Department of the Army requested the Operations Research Office (ORO) of The Johns Hopkins University to analyze the effects of integration and segregation on the Army. With the code name "Project Clear," the ORO research teams conducted a classified study that involved surveys in Korea, Japan and at ten training stations in the United States. While the Army awaited the results, General Matthew B. Ridgway, who replaced General MacArthur as the Far Eastern Commander, requested in April 1951, permission to integrate all Blacks throughout his command. Three months later, in July 1951, the Pentagon approved Ridgway's request. A big factor in the approval was the preliminary report of Project Clear issued in early July 1951, proclaiming integration to be an unqualified success and recommending that desegregation be extended Army-wide. This helped to crystallize the Army's resolve and on July 26, 1951, the Army publicly announced that all units in Japan, Korea, and Okinawa, would be integrated in about six months.²⁶

In November 1951, the final report of Project Clear was presented to the Department of the Army. The 661 page Confidential Report further stimulated integration. The substance of the findings of this study were as follows: Blacks, representing about one-eighth of the Army's strength and about one-tenth of the total U.S. population, were disproportionately represented in the two least qualified groups according to Army classification tests. With complete segregation, Black units would have about 62 percent low-scoring personnel compared

to 33 percent for White units and an Army average of 37 percent. In 1951, 58 percent of Black enlisted personnel were in the service branches and 42 percent in the combat arms, compared to 88 percent and 12 percent, respectively, in World War II.

In performance, the all-Black combat unit of regimental size or larger was less reliable than similar all-White units. The effectiveness of small Black units varied. Blacks performed better in integrated than in all-Black combat units according to the opinions of officers who served with integrated units in Korea. As individuals, Blacks in integrated units performed on a par with White soldiers in the same units. One to three Blacks in a squad did not appear to adversely affect the performance of the squad in combat; the effect of larger numbers was not determined because of insufficient data.

The concentration of low-scoring personnel in all-Black units limited the availability of leadership talent for such units. White officers commanding all-Black units tended to attribute their problems to race; White commanders of integrated units generally regarded their problems as military. Previous Army studies were supported in the conclusion that Black soldiers did not prefer White officers but accepted them on the basis of merit. Interview material showed that Whites accepted efficient Black noncommissioned and company-grade officers.

The report found that adding limited numbers of Black soldiers to a previously all-White unit did not lower the morale of the Whites in that unit, while the morale of the Blacks was raised. Almost all Blacks, regardless of stateside origin or their type of unit, favored integration. Those most opposed to integration generally were White

soldiers in predominantly Black units or in White units that were adjacent to all-Black units. However opposed to integration they might be, soldiers in all-White combat units indicated that they would not be actively hostile toward Black replacements. In most cases, as a result of integration, White soldiers became more favorably disposed toward serving in the same units with Black soldiers. Integration was accepted by White soldiers in all-White National Guard units called to active duty from both southern and northern states. Most officers and enlisted men with experience in integrated units thought that two Blacks per combat squad was the maximum level of integration.²⁷

The Report contained the following conclusions and recommendations:

CONCLUSIONS

1. The continued existence of racial segregation limits the effectiveness of the Army.
2. Integration enhances the effectiveness of the Army.
3. The Army-wide extension of integration is feasible.
4. No quota limitation is necessary at this time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Army should continue and extend its present policies of equality of opportunity and treatment and the utilization of Black manpower on the basis of individual qualifications as prescribed in SR 600-629-1.
2. The Army should commit itself to a policy of full and complete integration to be carried out as rapidly as operational efficiency permits.
3. The Army should impose no quota at this time.²⁸

When General Ridgway received permission to integrate all units (with the temporary exception of the 40th and 45th National Guard Divisions stationed in Japan), on 26 July, the third anniversary of President Truman's Executive Order 9981, he immediately ordered desegregation throughout his Far East Command. Three problems had to be solved. First, there was the inactivation of the 24th Infantry Regiment and the selection of a replacement unit. This was quickly resolved. Ridgway decided on the 14th Infantry Regiment, which had recently been assigned to his command. On October 1, 1951, it replaced the 24th all-Black Infantry in the 25th Division. The 24th Infantry was inactivated on the same date and its men and equipment transferred to other infantry units in Korea.²⁹

The second problem, the integration of all units throughout the command, was more difficult and time-consuming. Ridgway gave priority to infantry units. To speed up the process the plan to inactivate all segregated units was dropped; rather, it was decided simply to remove the designation "Segregated" and assign White soldiers to formerly all-Black units. By the end of October 1951, 75 percent of the Eighth Army units were integrated.³⁰

The third and biggest challenge was how to achieve a proportionate distribution of Black troops throughout the command. Ridgway was under orders to limit Black strength to a maximum of 10 percent in combat and 12 percent in combat support units. The temporary restriction on integrating the 40th and 45th Divisions (these divisions would be integrated when sent to Korea), and the lack of specially trained Blacks for logistical assignment in Japan, added

to the problem. But the real problem was the uncontrolled continued shipment of Black troops to the Far East Command. By October 1951, the proportion of Blacks in Korea was 17.6 percent. By September 1951, Black combat strength had reached 14.2 percent. Ridgway finally got Washington to raise the authorized ratio of Blacks in his combat units to 12 percent. Still, without control of the numbers of Blacks being assigned to his command, Ridgway was helpless in controlling the Black ratio. Still, these higher than desired numbers of Blacks had no negative impacts on performance.³¹

The Korean war ended on July 27, 1953. With regard to desegregation of the Army, what had begun as a battlefield expedient became official Army Policy.

United States and Alaska Commands

"Unauthorized" integration started to appear in areas other than in the Far East. Commanders on their own initiative, solved the problem of overstrength Black units by integrating excess Black soldiers into their White units that were generally understrength. By August 1951, 270 Regular Army units in the United States were partially integrated.³² In December 1951, the United States and Alaskan Army commanders were ordered by the Department of the Army to proceed with integration of all units under their command. By the end of 1951 the only major Army command not pursuing integration was United States Army, Europe.³³

United States Army, Europe (1951-1954)

In the summer of 1951, the Department of Defense sent Dr. Eli Ginzberg of Columbia University, a consultant for the Army on manpower problems, to Europe to inform General Thomas T. Handy and his staff in Heidelberg, that the Army had decided to end segregation and that General Handy should prepare a plan to accomplish this decision. Ginzberg encountered disbelief that integration had been successful in the United States and the Far East Command. Ginzberg found that the officers refused to believe that the Pentagon wanted Europe to integrate.³⁴

When Ginzberg returned to the Pentagon, he indicated that it would be necessary to "push" General Handy. In the fall of 1951, General J. Lawton Collins, the Army Chief of Staff, went to Germany and informed General Handy and his staff that he expected their support. After General Collins returned to Washington, the Department of the Army requested General Handy's integration plan.³⁵

In the middle of December 1951, the European Command submitted its plan for integration of Blacks into combat units. Handy's plan failed to conform to the Army's worldwide integration plan and was amended in Washington.³⁶

The following four elements in the European integration plan were disapproved and removed by Washington:

1. Screening Boards. The proposal to establish screening boards to test and evaluate the fitness of Black officers and certain noncommissioned officers for retention in combat units was disapproved by the Department of the Army.
2. Inactivation of Black Units on Request. The inactivation of Black units as such was also disapproved. However, requests for the inactivation of individual Black units actually

rendered surplus to the command through reassignment of personnel would be approved.

3. Extension of Integration to Service Units. General Collins informed the command that its integration plan would be extended to service units. Integration of service units would have to be either simultaneous with or subsequent to that in the combat units.
4. Publicity Blackout. The Department of the Army saw no need for publicizing the projected integration program. Far from precluding adverse reaction, releasing special publicity invite criticism. The Army wanted the program to proceed quietly and as a routine matter without fanfare or publicity because this was the procedure followed in Korea with no adverse reaction.³⁷

With these exceptions and modifications, the Department of the Army approved the plan for integration in Europe without stipulating a date for implementation of the program. General Handy indicated the command's readiness to implement the plan on April 1, 1952. Army approval followed.

Integration began in Europe on schedule without incident. Handy directed that Blacks be assigned as individuals in a 1 to 10 ratio in all units. This figure was adjusted upward in 1953 to a maximum of 12 percent for infantry and armor units, 15 percent for combat engineers and artillery, and 17.5 percent for all other units.³⁸ In September 1953 the new commander, General Alfred M. Gruenther, in an effort to slow the rate of increase, got Washington to stop the shipment of Black units and instituted stricter reenlistment standards in Europe. By mid-1953 Blacks accounted for 16 percent of Army personnel in Europe. To keep from reclassifying combat-trained Black soldiers to noncombat assignments, Gauenther again raised the acceptable ratio of Blacks in combat units. He also told his commanders to treat ratios merely as guidelines. The last Black unit in Europe, the 94th Engineer Battalion, was inactivated in November 1954.³⁹

Integration of Black soldiers in Europe proved successful. The command's combat readiness increased, while its racial incidents and disciplinary problems declined. The concerns and uncertainties of senior officials eased, and the attitudes of some even moved from outright opposition to praise and considered the integration program as one of their major achievements.⁴⁰

Department of Defense Schools

The desegregation of federally funded schools attended by children of service members was addressed by the Eisenhower Administration in 1953. The integration of schools operated by local school authorities on military posts was a complex issue. After reviewing the issue, President Eisenhower and the Secretary of Defense, Charles E. Wilson, agreed to end segregation in all schools on military installations "as swiftly as practicable." On January 12, 1954, Wilson ordered effective this date "no new school shall be opened for operation on a segregated basis, and schools presently so conducted shall cease operating on a segregated basis, as soon as practicable, and under no circumstances later than September 1, 1955."⁴¹ It is interesting to note that Wilson's order predated the Supreme Court decision on segregated education by four months.

The order prompted considerable response from the public. The military services quickly responded. As a result, the Assistant Secretary of Defense announced in December 1954, that two schools, one at Craig Air Force Base, Alabama, and Fort Fort Belvoir, Virginia, were integrated. The remaining Department of Defense schools would be fully integrated by the September 1955 deadline.⁴²

The controversy over schools demonstrated the commitment of the government towards desegregation in the military.

Summary

Official figures show that the number of all-Black units had been reduced from 385 in June 1950 to 88 in August 1953. By 1954 the Army was totally integrated and segregation and discrimination had virtually been eliminated from the active military forces.⁴³ A quiet racial revolution had occurred with no violence, bloodshed or conflict. The Fahy Committee's insistence for the removal of racial quotas, coupled with the need for American soldiers to fight a war in Korea, led Army commanders to integrate its force. President Truman's Executive Order 9981 was achieved and the armed forces led the American nation to the realization that "all men are created equal."

ENDNOTES

1. MacGregor, p. 312.
2. Dalfiume, p. 171.
3. MacGregor, p. 315.
4. Leo Bogart, ed., Social Research and the Desegregation of the U.S. Army: Two Original 1951 Reports, p. 18.
5. MacGregor, p. 317.
6. Ibid., p. 322.
7. Ibid., p. 331.
8. Ibid., p. 360.
9. Morris J. Macgregor and Bernard C. Nalty, ed. Blacks in the United States Armed Forces: Basic Documents. Vol. 12: Integration. pp. 161-169.
10. U.S. President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services. Freedom to Serve. p. 61.
11. Bogart, p. 18.
12. Johns Hopkins University. Operations Research Office, The Utilization of Negro Manpower in the Army, p. 3.
13. Bogart, p. 19.
14. Lee Nichols, Breakthrough on the Color Front, p. 109.
15. Morris J. MacGregor and Bernard C. Nalty, ed. Blacks in the United States Armed Forces: Basic Documents. Vol. 12: Integration, pp. 215-229.
16. Dalfiume, p. 205-206.
17. Ronald Sher, Integration of Negro and White Troops in the U.S. Army, Europe 1952-1954, p. 7.
18. Dalfiume, p. 206.
19. "Chaplains Should Practice Nonsegregation Too," Christian Century, 7 March 1951, p. 292.
20. Bogart, p. 20.
21. Ibid., pp. 19-20.

22. Dalfiume, p. 206.
23. Ibid., pp. 207-208.
24. Ibid., pp. 208-209.
25. Ibid., p. 209.
26. Ibid., pp. 209-211.
27. Johns Hopkins University, p. 4.
28. Ibid., pp. 5-6.
29. MacGregor, pp. 444-445.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., pp. 445-447.
32. Dalfiume, p. 212.
33. Ibid., pp. 212-216.
34. Ibid., pp. 216-217.
35. Ibid.
36. MacGregor, p. 451.
37. Sher, pp. 13-14.
38. MacGregor, p. 451.
39. Ibid., p. 452.
40. Ibid., 453.
41. Ibid., p. 492.
42. Ibid., 493.
43. Foner, p. 193.

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9. MacGregor, Morris J. Integration of the Armed Forces 1940-1965. Washington, D. C.: Center of Military History United States Army, 1981.
10. MacGregor, Morris J., and Nalty, Bernard C., ed. Blacks in the United States Armed Forces: Basic Documents. Vol. 12: Integration. Wilmington Delaware: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1977. Pp. 161-169: "Report of Board of Officers on Utilization of Negro Manpower in The Army," by Lieutenant General Stephen J. Chamberlin, et al.
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